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Commission on the Status of Women
Fiftieth session
27 February-10 March 2006
Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives

Statement submitted by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.6/2006/1.

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Statement

The two major themes on the agenda of 50th session of the Commission on the Status of Women are of paramount importance to the Sorority in its role as a non-governmental organization dedicated to empowering communities through committed service.

Theme One: Enhanced participation of women in development, an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women, taking into account, inter alia, the fields of education, health and work.

Recognizing that social action is personal, local and global, Delta's National Social Action Commission works collectively with the Sorority's national officers, regional and local membership, and coalition partners, to promote leadership, advocacy and empowerment to effect social change and public policy, resulting in improved well-being of individuals and families, especially African Americans and women.

The Sorority provides assistance worldwide through programs in local communities based upon its Five Point Thrust:

- Economic Development
- Educational Development
- International Awareness and Involvement
- Physical and Mental Health
- Political Awareness and Involvement

The Dr. Betty Shabazz Delta Academy was created, recognizing that bold action was needed to save young females (ages 11-14) from the perils of academic failure, and low self-esteem. The program enhances the education they receive in public schools across the United States of America. It was expanded to "catch the dreams" of African American at-risk girls (ages 14-18). Delta GEMS provides the framework to actualize those dreams, and tools for achieving academic success.

Nothing is more precious than the gift of life, nor more miraculous than childbirth. Prenatal care and safe birth deliveries are practices often taken for granted in the United States. Yet, adequate prenatal and maternity care is often not experienced by women in our ancestral homeland of Africa. Recognizing this critical health issue, Delta has supported safe birthing through contributions to the Mary Help of the Sick Mission Hospital in Kenya (formerly Thika Maternity Hospital) and by supporting the WHO Maama kit program.

In April 2006, on the island of Jamaica, it will hold an International Summit on Health Issues Impacting Women of African Descent."

Theme Two: Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels

Equal access of men and women to power, decision-making and leadership is a vital precondition for proper functioning of democracy. Yet, traditionally, women have been excluded.

The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men. The Sorority works collaboratively with women's and human rights organizations to urge the United States Congress to ratify the CEDAW Convention and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Sorority continues its collaboration with like-minded non-governmental organizations on strategies that advance women's leadership and promote appropriate linkages between the gender equality goals established in Beijing and the Millennium Development Goals.